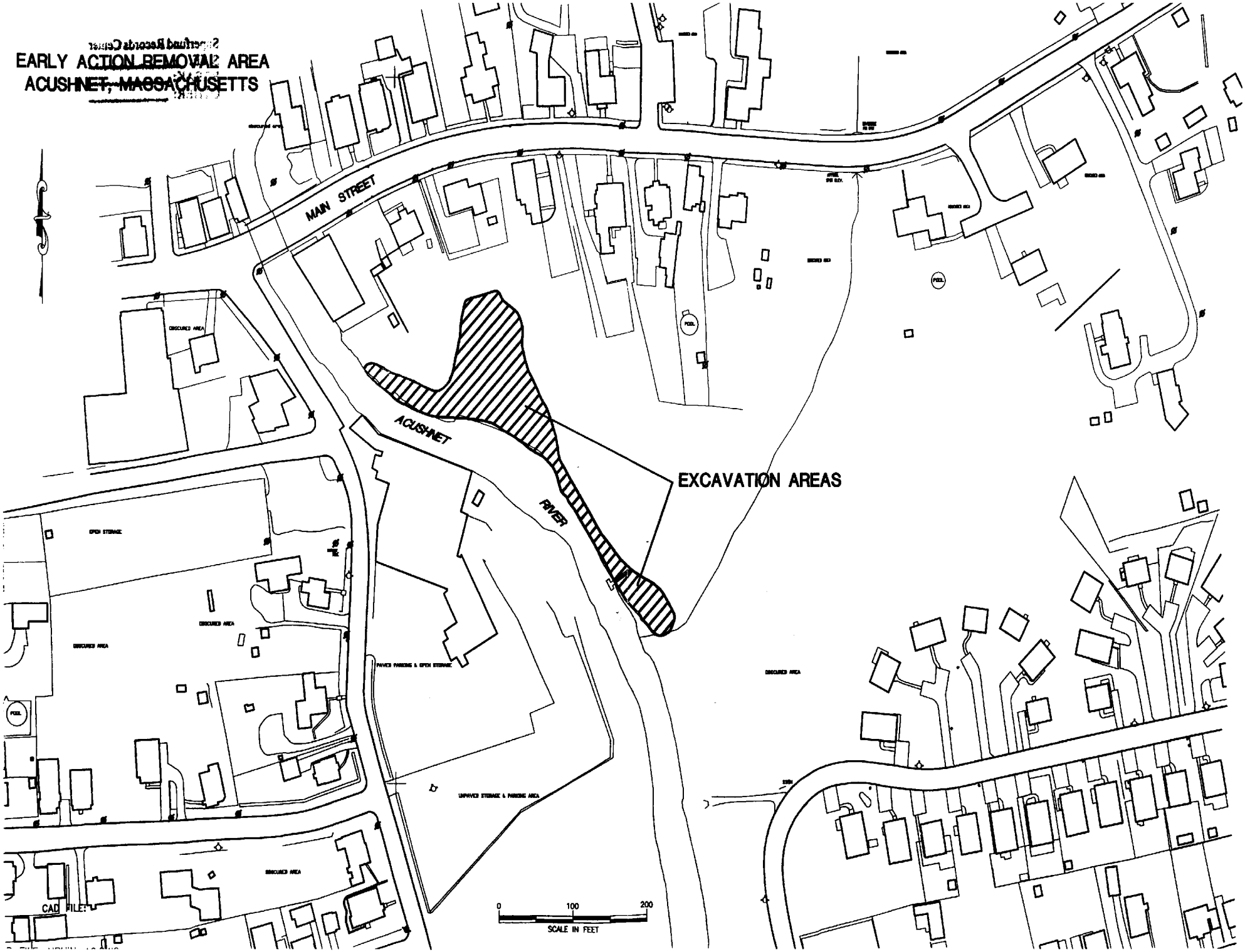
EPA to begin shoreline PCB cleanup in Acushnet

- see map inside for area to be excavated
- shoreline sediments will be excavated and placed in sealed containers and trucked to Sawyer Street in New Bedford
- work will occur from January through March, with replanting of trees and marsh grass in April
- air monitoring will be performed to ensure the safety of neighboring residents
- this work is being done as part of the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site cleanup
- see last page for contacts and more info

EARLY ACTION REMOVAL AREA
ACUSHNET, MASSACHUSETTS



For more information:

- David Dickerson, USEPA New England, 617/918-1329
- Maurice Beaudoin, US Army Corps of Engineers, 508/990-2550 or 990-1638

Project History and Description

Wide scale PCB contamination of New Bedford Harbor was first identified in the 1970s, and the site was added to the federal Superfund list in 1983. PCB stands for polychlorinated biphenyl, an industrial coolant once used in the electronics industry but now known as a probable carcinogen. PCB wastes were discharged to the harbor sediments both directly and through overflow discharges of the New Bedford sewerage system. The main health risk from the site is consumption of local seafood, since PCBs do not degrade significantly over time but rather become more concentrated in the marine food chain. A secondary health risk is presented from repeated contact with contaminated shoreline sediments.

EPA's previous cleanup efforts include a pilot dredging study in 1989, removal of the most-highly contaminated 5 acres of sediment in 1994-1995, and selection of an overall remedy for the harbor in 1998. The removal of the shoreline sediments in Acushnet is one of the first steps being taken under this 1998 cleanup plan, since shoreline PCBs have been found near a residential area. Please note that PCBs have NOT been found at levels of concern in residential backyards, but rather only in shoreline and wetland areas (see map inside).

This shoreline cleanup will first involve building temporary sand and gravel roads to allow excavation and removal equipment to access the shoreline. The contaminated sediments will then be excavated and placed immediately into sealed containers for removal to Sawyer Street in New Bedford. All vehicles and equipment will be "decontaminated" before leaving the shoreline area, to ensure that contaminated sediments do not get spread beyond their current limits. Clean backfill material will then be placed to restore the excavated shoreline areas. The temporary roads will then be removed, and the area returned to original conditions. Note that we hope a side benefit of this work will be to replace the invasive stand of common reeds ("phragmatis") with a higher value saltmarsh composed of smooth cordgrass (Spartina alternaflora) to be planted in April.